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Northwest Vacations

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In the late summer of 1953 I decided to visit my sister in Seattle, spend some time in that vicinity, and then continue to Alaska on an extended tour. Although my primary objective was sight-seeing, I planned to search for ferns when opportunity permitted.

On August 28th I took the midnight plane from New York to Seattle, reaching my destination in the early morning. My sister met me at the airport, and in the afternoon we left on a camping trip to the Olympic Peninsula. That night we spent under the stars on the shore of Lake Crescent halfway across the peninsula, spreading our sleeping bags beneath towering Douglas Firs amidst a luxuriant bed of the Sword Fern (*Polystichum munifolium*).

The next day dawned bright and clear as we headed toward the Rain Forest along the Hoh River on the western coast, where prevailing winds bring excessive moisture from the Pacific, causing an annual rainfall averaging 140 inches or more. Near the entrance to the nature trail were gigantic specimens of the Western Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum* var. *pubescens*) considerably taller than a man's head.

Here also I first became acquainted with the Deer Fern (*Blechnum spicant*), which I was to see later many times in Alaska and elsewhere. This species is a source of food for deer, elk, and caribou during the winter.

In the Rain Forest itself giant trees reached skyward as we made our way along the nature trail—Sitka Spruce, Western Hemlock, Douglas Fir and Western Red Cedar. In the depths of the forest tree trunks and fallen logs were covered with a dense

carpet of luxuriant mosses, and enormous mushrooms of varied hues were everywhere in evidence. Although ferns were plentiful, no rarities were observed in the limited time we had available.

The following day I took an early morning plane for Juneau, the Alaskan capital. While there I made it a point to visit the famous Mendenhall Glacier, one of the largest in the world, and most impressive in its vast expanse and vivid coloration. We were told that natural ice from this glacier is generally used in the city in preference to that made artificially. On rock ledges at the foot of the glacier was a plentiful growth of the Parsley Fern (*Cryptogramma acrostichoides*).

A short boat trip over a picturesque section of the Inside Passage took me from Juneau to Skagway on Chilkoot Inlet, starting point of old-time prospectors headed for the Klondike during the days of the gold rush. In the local cemetery, where the victims of gun battles lie buried (including a notorious outlaw as well as the town sheriff), the Oak Fern (*Phegopteris dryopteris*) was conspicuous. The western form of the Licorice Fern (*Polypodium vulgare* var. *occidentale*) was common in the crevices of Skagway cliffs.

From Skagway I journeyed to White Horse in Yukon Territory by way of a quaint narrow-gauge steam railroad (since converted to Diesel), traversing the rugged White Pass along the Trail of '98 in Alaska, cutting across part of British Columbia, and finally entering Yukon Territory, with breath-taking views and magnificent mountain scenery the entire distance.

Continuing by plane to Fairbanks, I spent about a week in this area at the height of the autumn coloration, using the city as a base for trips north of the Arctic Circle. First I flew to the colorful Eskimo village of Kotzebue on the Bering Strait, spent the night in this interesting community, then returned to Fairbanks by way of Nome. The weather was so clear that as we passed over the western tip of the Seward Peninsula the Diomedede Islands in Bering Strait were plainly visible, and just beyond, the rocky headland of Siberia.

My second tour out of Fairbanks was again by plane. This time I crossed the Arctic Circle in eastern Alaska en route to the Indian village of Fort Yukon on the Yukon River. Here I chartered a bush plane to fly along the East Fork of the Chandalar River to take pictures of moose and caribou. Returning by commercial plane from Fort Yukon to Fairbanks, we stopped briefly at Circle Hot Springs. Here, in the shadow of the Arctic Circle, hot baths and warm swimming pools are found. Assisted by the tepid environment and long summer days, enormous vegetables are grown in the thermal gardens, with fifty-pound cabbages not uncommon. On rocks just above the springs, where the steaming water seeps out and is carried in pipes to the baths, I noted a thriving colony of an arctic form of the Lady Fern (*Athyrium filix-femina* var. *sitchense*). This previously reported station has been cited as one of the few locations for this species in the entire Central Yukon River District, the other locations also being at hot springs.¹

Journeying by Alaska Railway from Fairbanks to Anchorage, I stopped off for several days at McKinley National Park to glimpse the big game and wild life for which this area is noted, and also to get close-up views of snow-capped Mt. McKinley. Exploring the tundra and foothills back of the hotel, I found the Rusty Woodsia (*Woodsia ilvensis*) and the Fragrant Shield Fern (*Dryopteris fragrans*) abundant on rocky ledges. The latter was also plentiful at the base of Castle Rock, a striking formation overlooking the Savage River. It seemed strange indeed to find this fern, so rare in New England, actually common in McKinley National Park.

I continued by railroad via Anchorage to Seward in the southern part of the Kenai Peninsula, where I embarked on a week's cruise over the famed Inside Passage to Seattle. It was the last year the Alaska Steamship Co. carried passengers over this scenic route, thenceforth restricting its activities to freight

¹Scamman, Edith. 1949. Ferns and fern allies of the central Yukon Valley. *Amer. Fern J.* **39**: 47-48.

traffic only. Passing the Columbia Glacier, then stopping at Valdez, we docked briefly at Cordova on the Gulf of Alaska. Here I ventured along a trail into the coastal rain forest, where *Blechnum spicant*, the Deer Fern, grew in profusion. On an exposed cliff near Cordova Harbor I found an unusual form of the Fragile Fern (*Cystopteris fragilis*), remarkable by reason of the pinnae not being deeply incised into the usual divisions, giving a blunt-lobed effect. Specimens were later requested by, and donated to, the National Herbarium, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

Passing snow-capped mountain peaks, glittering glaciers and steep-walled fjords, with stops at Juneau and Ketchikan, we traversed the final stretch of the Inside Passage and reached Seattle on September 24th, where I again visited my sister. I then made several trips into the Cascade Mountains. On a fold-boating expedition to Lake Kachees we explored the lake shores and adjacent ravines. In addition to the Parsley Fern (*Cryptogramma acrostichoides*), the graceful Fragile Fern (*Cystopteris fragilis*), and the ubiquitous Licorice Fern (*Polypodium vulgare* var. *occidentale*), the most interesting find of the day was the beautiful Holly Fern (*Polystichum lonchitis*).

Dr. Wherry had suggested that while I was in Seattle I look up Carl S. English, Jr., employed by the Government as a landscape gardener at the Lake Washington Ship Canal, who is thoroughly familiar with the ferns of the Northwest. Mrs. English, who is also a professional student of the botany and zoology of this region, often accompanies her husband on his various field trips. Together they have taken beautiful color photographs of wild flowers, animals, birds, and mountain scenery, and their lectures are in constant demand.

In the brief space of an hour or so a visitor to the Englishes' luxuriant fern garden becomes acquainted with most rarities of the Northwest, representing collections from far distant localities. Here can be seen an unusual dwarf form of the Maidenhair Fern (*Adiantum pedatum*) collected in the state of Washington, the Oregon Shield Fern (*Dryopteris oregana*)

from a locality near Mount Hood, Bird's-foot Cliff Brake (*Pellaea mucronata*) from California, the Green Spleenwort (*Asplenium viride*) from lime-bearing high mountain cliffs, Anderson's Shield Fern (*Polystichum andersonii*) from the Cascades, Giant Chain Fern (*Woodwardia fimbriata*) from southern Oregon, the Northern Grape Fern (*Botrychium boreale* var. *obtusilobum*) from the north side of Mount St. Helens, Skamania County, Washington, and the Gold-back Fern (*Pityrogramma triangularis*) from the Columbia River region.

One day Mr. English invited me on an expedition to Wenatchee National Forest in Kittitas County. Here, on serpentine cliffs above the Teanaway River, he showed me two uncommon species of *Polystichum*, Eaton's Fern (*P. scopulinum*) and the Shasta Fern (*P. lemmonii*), in company with the more frequently encountered Holly Fern (*P. lonchitis*). Also found were the Dense Cliff Brake (*Pellaea densa*) and the delicate, little Lace Fern (*Cheilanthes gracillima*). At higher altitudes, growing on the rocky ledges of cascading rivulets in a setting of variegated mountain wild flowers, we saw the Alpine Maidenhair (*Adiantum pedatum* var. *aleuticum*), in strange contrast to the shady, forest habitat of its eastern cousin.

On the first day of October I accompanied Mr. and Mrs. English on a visit to the slopes of Mount Rainier. The autumn coloration, featuring the Vine Maple, was at its height as we drew near the snow-capped mountain. In rock crevices along the White River at the northern approach we saw the Rocky Mountain Woodsia (*Woodsia scopulina*), and in evergreen woods near Silver Springs the Sword Fern (*Polystichum munitum*) formed a thick covering on the forest floor. We attempted to drive to Yakima Park on the north side of Mount Rainier, but a severe snowstorm forced us to turn around at the halfway point. As Mr. English stopped to put on chains, a large black bear appeared in the roadway, watched curiously for a few moments, then disappeared before his photograph could be taken. With this Rainier trip my 1953 visit to the Northwest came to an end, and I flew back East on the midnight plane.

It was the summer of 1962 before I made a return visit to the Pacific Northwest, this time for a reunion with my two sisters, my brother, and his family. In late July we met at Lake Louise in the Canadian Rockies for several days of sightseeing and enjoying the beauty of this mountain paradise. One interesting side trip featured a visit to the Columbia Icefield on the border between Banff and Jasper National Parks, where melting glacier waters flow in three different directions—northward into the Arctic Ocean, eastward into Hudson Bay and the Atlantic, and southwestward into the Pacific Ocean. By snowmobile we bounced unsteadily over the Athabasca Glacier, largest body of ice south of the Arctic Circle, to Mount Andromeda and the “hanging glaciers.”

Following our sojourn in the Canadian Rockies, we traveled by train and boat to Seattle to attend the World's Fair. We enjoyed the various exhibits, rode the monorail to downtown Seattle, and had breakfast in the revolving restaurant atop the Space Needle. Although the view over the city was superb, cloudy weather marred the distant view, and Mount Rainier unfortunately failed to put in an appearance.

Before leaving Seattle I renewed my acquaintance with Carl English and his wife, and arranged to join them on August 11th for another field trip into the Cascade Mountains. This time we planned to go to Mount Baker National Forest in an area farther north than I had previously visited. At a point about one mile east of Monte Cristo, Snohomish County, we began climbing the talus slope of the steep mountainside. At an elevation of approximately 4000 feet we detected a few scattered but vigorous clumps of the rare Anderson's Shield Fern (*Polystichum andersonii*) under low, spreading Mountain Alder (*Alnus sinuata*). This handsome fern is noted for the occasional proliferous buds on the upper surfaces near the ends of the fronds. In sunny locations in the near vicinity the Alpine Lady Fern (*Athyrium alpestre* var. *americanum*) was plentiful.

Continuing our climb to high cliffs at an elevation of about 4700 feet, we found occasional specimens of the attractive little Green Spleenwort (*Asplenium viride*). Nearby the Alpine Maidenhair (*Adiantum pedatum* var. *aleuticum*) and the Long Beech Fern (*Phegopteris polypodioides*) were conspicuous. All during the ascent we saw beautiful wild flowers of all colors in great profusion, varying in species according to the elevation and location. Colorful members of the Heath family were particularly in evidence. In one locality Mr. English pointed out the Alaskan Buttercup (*Ranunculus cooleyae*), an extreme rarity in this latitude.

Returning to the car via a circuitous route past the Columbia Cirque and an eroded trail down a steep gully, we passed a shaded area where the relatively rare Mountain Wood Fern (*Dryopteris oreopteris*) grew sparingly beside the path, together with the more common Oak Fern (*Phegopteris dryopteris*).

In mid-August I left Seattle and flew back to Washington after a fairly strenuous but most enjoyable Northwest Vacation.

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Fern Records for Echols County and the State of Georgia

JUANITA NORSWORTHY

Echols County is in the Coastal Plain Province, in south-central Georgia. Its soils are mainly sandy and of Pleistocene origin. Older geologic formations occasionally outcrop along the banks of larger streams. The topography is generally flat and has poor drainage. The dominant vegetation consists of pines (*Pinus caribaea* Morel., *P. serotina* Michx.) and Saw Palmetto (*Serenoa repens* (Bartr.) Small). Along the major streams the flatwoods vegetation yields to upland deciduous associations.